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A MEDICAL MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA

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"That's him, he with that white pot of a hat on his head; he is working miracles in the town." "How you talk; who is he?" said a voice. "Why, do you not know, have you not heard of Harris, the American, of Tripoli?" "What can he do that is so strange?" again said the voice. "Well, I will tell you. My brother's daughter, a child of fourteen years, had a tumor on her neck as large as your head; there is a young man who for ten years has been engaged to marry her, but when he saw that tumor he demanded the return of his presents. That would never do, as you know. When we heard of that Harris' doings in the town, my brother requested me to take the girl and see what could be done for her, and when the doctor saw her he said it was easy to remove the disease, and by the great Prophet Mohammed, he put her on a white table, the like of which I never dreamed, put some fluid into an instrument and made the girl smell it; and soon she was as one dead. Then he took from a vessel a lot of strange looking instruments that had been cooking for such a long time, and by the memory of all the Prophets, how that man did cut. Soon the tumor was removed, and the girl's head was over half off, and the wound was full of instruments that looked like burn-

ished silver. I tell you, I was afraid. I thought the girl would die. I then got angry, and felt like killing the doctor. He said, 'Be not afraid, she will soon be well.' Then he took some boiled silk thread and tied and tied, at the same time removing the instruments; then the skin and flesh were sewed as if cloth, until her head was on again, and yards of cooked cotton cloth were wrapped around the neck until she looked like the head Sheikh at the Mosque. All this was eight days ago, and this morning the doctor removed the bandages, and the wound was well; and next week she is to be married. I wish you could have heard the reading from the Book and the sweet words of the preacher, of the wise sayings of the Prophet Jesus. I wish our Sheikh would talk to us like that."

Two weeks before this conversation, which took place in a Moslem shop in the city of Hums, North Syria, Dr. Harris, his assistant, the pastor of the Mission Church, and two of its members began a five weeks' MEDICAL MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN.

The Mission property at Hums consists of a church building, a number of rooms all surrounding an open court. The rooms are occupied by the pastor's family and the girls' school. The Church building consists of one large room divided in the center from the pulpit by a red curtain, the men on one side, the women on the other. In all the churches of the Eastern Christian sects there is no place for women other than a small room, usually in a gallery over the entrance door, separated

from the body of the church by a fine lattice work of wood. For years the mission doctor, on occasion, has used this room for his clinic and operation room. Two seats, turned on their sides, secured together with rope, were used as an operating table, but it was a rude, clumsy substitute at best. Now for the first time, a beautiful, white-enameled, American operating table takes its place; a large, portable sterilizing apparatus, a generous supply of instruments, two trunks, one containing Bibles and tracts, the other medicines, and all is ready for the business of the day.

What a crowd—the church is full—so is the court back to the outside door into the street. There there is a fight to get inside. Within, the people are not unruly, but each one does his best to get to the doctor. It is seldom so many Moslems crowd into a Protestant church. There are a number of "Holy Men" who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca—the head religious Sheikh of Hums, the Judge of the town, some military officers and a number of the leading citizens—together with a number of poor, diseased and deformed men, women and children. The lesson of the morning was Christ's sermon on the Mount, and for once these people heard a plain talk of Christ's mission on earth, of His power to save.

As the days passed, it became evident a more spacious place was necessary. It was impossible to handle the crowds and do good work, so a building with five rooms was hired. At the end of the campaign the record read, 2,672 patients treated, 153 operations, of which

71 were for disease of the eye. Daily services with the patients, special evening meetings were held with the brethren at the church and at their homes, and lectures on secular topics were given on four occasions.

Only too soon the time came to announce there would be no time for more clinics. With salaams from all and a wish for a speedy return, the doctor and his assistant took train for Nameth.

The train had just pulled out of the station when a fierce-looking man in the uniform of the Turkish police looked into the window, and almost poked his finger into the eye of a foreigner sitting near, and said, "Your Basserbort." He evidently was not pleased, the nostrils of his large nose dilated, his strong, large mouth was partly open, showing teeth stained with tobacco smoke; the coarse, gray hairs of his mustache stood out straight; his eyes, which were black, bordered with bushy eyebrows, had a cruel gleam, which seemed to say, "Let me get you into my grasp, then look out." Taken altogether he was a vicious-looking man.

"Well, are you not going to give me your Basserbort?"

"I have one, but I do not think it necessary to give it to you for I am not a stranger in these parts," said the foreigner.

"Oh, who are you?" said the officer, with a savage grin. A native sitting at the side of the foreigner said, "This is Dr. Harris, the American, have you not heard of him?" That hard, strong face lost its look of anger, and

the officer said, "So you are the man everyone is talking of the past few weeks; just look into my eye and see if it is not sick and in need of medicine." He was assured it was not serious, a simple remedy and less tobacco smoke would cure him. He passed to the next carriage without insisting further for a passport.

The train soon came to a full stop. Some Bedwin had put a heap of stones on the line. This is often done, for the Bedwin feel bitter towards the railway, for it has taken from them almost all the carrying trade which has been theirs from time immemorial. The stones were soon removed, and the journey of ten miles an hour was resumed. Why burn coal when there is lots of time—three hours to make thirty miles—to get there sooner would be a fine, and perhaps a discharge for the engine driver.

At Hameth the doctor and his assistant were met by a delegation of the brethren. A visit to Mahardeh, three hours to the west of Hameth, a busy four days of medical work, prayer-meetings held on the roof of the preacher's house, were delightful experiences.

Hameth is a city of 68,000 people, of which about 8,000 only are Christian, the majority of whom are dependent upon their Moslem neighbors for a living. Therefore there are very many who are miserably poor, living in rooms dug out of the chalk cliffs bordering the river. Words fail to describe the poverty and wretchedness of these people; disease in all its dreadful forms, especially that of the eye, reigns supreme. Quacks ply their trade unhindered by

the Government or people. To tell of the fearful things they do, of the sight destroyed, would make a story of itself. One girl came with her hand and part of her arm dead from the use of strong carbolic acid a quack had given her. Another lost her sight from the use of granular sugar and silver nitrate.

In the three weeks spent at Hamath the record gives 844 patients treated, and 94 operations, many of which were on the eye; 34 services for prayer and Bible readings, and many visits to the homes of the people.

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